



IOWA RECOVERY TIMES

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**Safer, Stronger,
Smarter**

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MARCH TO BE DECLARED "FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH" IN IOWA

The declaration of "Flood Awareness Month" on March 1 will kick off a month-long public information campaign by the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO), the Iowa Insurance Division (IID), the Iowa Department of Natural

Resources (DNR), the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) and FEMA.

Representatives from the participating agencies will conduct media interviews across the state to talk about

participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), why flood insurance is important, and encourage Iowans to know their flood risk and take steps to protect themselves from future disasters.

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REBUILD IOWA OFFICE PLANS "CIVIC ORGANIZATION TOUR"

The Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) will be presenting to civic organizations across the state this spring in recognition of March Flood Awareness Month.

RIO Executive Director Lt. General Ron Dardis and other RIO staff members will be speaking with Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs and other community groups to discuss the continuing recovery efforts from the 2008 disasters in Iowa, as well as ways Iowans can protect themselves and their communities from the next disaster.

While thousands of Iowans were directly impacted by the disasters, all Iowa residents are stakeholders in

Iowa's recovery. As the state agency charged with coordinating the recovery from the 2008 storms, tornadoes and floods, the RIO wants to raise awareness of disaster assistance programs and policies that are working to rebuild a safer, stronger and smarter Iowa.

Topics covered during the presentations will include a history of the 2008 disasters; an overview of the statewide case management system developed after the disasters to help individuals navigate through their recovery; details on flood insurance and how it impacts Iowans and communities; and what other cities have done to mitigate future disasters.



Lt. Gen. Ron Dardis discusses Iowa's disaster recovery efforts in Mason City.

If you would like a presentation organized in your community, call the Rebuild Iowa Office at (515) 242-5233 or e-mail adam.bartelt@rio.iowa.gov.

FLOOD AWARENESS MONTH (continued from page 1)

Considering the need for flood insurance is important in the spring when the flood risk is usually the greatest, and because there is a 30-day waiting period between the purchase date and when the insurance goes into effect.

This year, officials with the National Weather Service (NWS) predict a high risk of significant flooding in the state through April 2010. This is due in part to the record snowfall seen this winter ranging from 150 percent to 200 percent of normal amounts. Combining this with consistent low temperatures has resulted in above-normal snow depth for much of the state, especially northwest Iowa. Rapid spring warm ups and greater amounts of precipitation could increase the likelihood and severity of flooding.

According to FEMA, the average homeowner's flood insurance premium in Iowa is about \$722, with coverage available for homes outside the high-risk flood plains at a lower cost. Premiums for flood insurance will vary depending upon risk level for a flood loss, the amount of coverage and the type of coverage needed.

There was a significant increase in the purchase of flood insurance policies during the months following the 2008 disasters. From June of 2008 to May of 2009 the number of flood insurance policies in Iowa increased by more than 40 percent, the second-highest annual increase on flood insurance policies, behind North Dakota, for that time period in the United States. As of the end of May of 2009 there were 15,363 policies in

force compared to 10,962 at the beginning of June of 2008.

The number of policies has slipped slightly, as time from the 2008 disasters grows longer. Officials from the various agencies would like to see the number of flood insurance policies increase.

Flood insurance can be purchased for a home or business directly from a property and casualty insurance agent if the community participates in the NFIP. To find out which communities participate, visit www.iid.state.ia.us. For more information about the National Flood Insurance Program, visit the NFIP Web site at www.floodsmart.gov.

Information included in this article provided by IID, DNR and NWS.

“A Watershed Year: Anatomy of the Iowa Floods of 2008” Lessons Learned – Preparing for the Future Symposium

**Tuesday, March 9, 2010
6:30 - 8:00 P.M.
Iowa State Historical Building
Des Moines, Iowa**

Agenda:

Welcome:

About the book:

Trends in Iowa precipitation:

Trends in Iowa water run-off:

Iowa Flood Center:

Cedar Falls flood plain initiative:

State policy recommendations:

Panel with audience Q and A

Refreshments and book signing

Jerry Schnoor, Co-director, UI Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research; Chairman, Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council

Connie Mutel, Editor of “A Watershed Year: Anatomy of the Iowa Floods of 2008”

Gene Takle, Director, Climate Change Initiative; Prof. of Atmospheric Science, Prof. of Agricultural Meteorology, Department of Agronomy, Iowa State University

Richard Cruse, Prof. of Agronomy, Iowa State University; Director, Iowa Water Center

Witold Krajewski, Director, Iowa Flood Center, University of Iowa

Kamyar Enshayan, Cedar Falls City Council

Lieutenant General Ron Dardis, Executive Director, Rebuild Iowa Office

For more details about the book: <http://uipress.uiowa.edu/books/2010-spring/mutel-water.htm>

Contact:

State Senator Joe Bolkcom

Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research: <http://www.cgrer.uiowa.edu/>

(319) 353-2681; joe-bolkcom@uiowa.edu

IOWANS ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN 2010 CENSUS

The United States Census Bureau will be mailing questionnaires to all residential addresses across Iowa in late February and March in order to count all persons living in the country as of April 1, 2010. Taken every ten years, achieving a complete and accurate count is important as the information collected is used to allocate billions of dollars in government resources and to determine boundaries for political representation. All information collected regarding particular households is confidential as specified by US law.

Your part in the census is as easy as taking 10 minutes to fill out your census form and mail it back. The 2010 census questionnaire

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Census
2010

is one of the shortest in history and consists of 10 questions. If you would like to learn more about the Census, would like to be more involved in the Census, or your household does not receive a questionnaire by mid-March, please visit the State Data Center of Iowa for contact information and other resources at www.iowadatacenter.org/2010census.

TAXES AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE

If you or someone you know has questions about how to report disaster assistance this tax season, contact the Iowa Department of Revenue. Questions about Iowa tax law may be directed to Iowa Taxpayer Services at 1-800-367-3388, or (515) 281-3114, or e-mail at idr@iowa.gov.

If you need assistance filing your taxes, a listing of free tax preparation sites statewide

can be found on the Iowa Department of Revenue's Web site at www.iowa.gov/tax.

More information about taxes and disaster assistance can also be found on the Internal Revenue Service Web site at www.irs.gov.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS HELPS BUSINESSES PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES

Barry Branson made assisting small businesses with disaster preparedness his niche after going to work as a disaster recovery coordinator for the Region XII Council of Governments in May of 2009.

Despite the Region XII area being included in the presidential disaster declarations from the floods and tornadoes of 2008, the area didn't sustain the level of devastation experienced in eastern Iowa, Branson said. However, the 2008 disasters prompted Branson to make local disaster preparedness for small businesses his mission.

"Some of my counterparts, there are 19 of us statewide, were inundated with work tied to the 2008 disasters," said Branson who works out of the Region XII office in Carroll. "In our area, we didn't have a lot of physical problems, but, we needed to continue to help Iowans prepare for the next disaster. After talking to county emergency coordinators in my region, we all agreed the business area was one very important aspect of disaster preparedness planning that needed attention."

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"Everyone thinks that a disaster is not going to happen to them, but if a business is prepared, then at least employees will be ready when it occurs."

*-Barry Branson
Region XII Disaster
Recovery Coordinator*

The Rebuild Iowa Office



The Rebuild Iowa Office is tasked with ensuring that the state rebuilds safer, stronger and smarter than before the 2008 disasters. The RIO is supported by a professional staff made up of existing state employees and hired full-time staff to allow it to achieve its mission, vision, goals and objectives. Throughout its initiatives, the RIO is committed to a recovery and rebuilding process that is fair and equitable to everyone.

www.rio.iowa.gov

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PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES (continued from page 3)

Branson quickly got to work collaborating with businesses in Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac counties.

With disaster preparedness as his main focus, he took information from various Web sites from such agencies as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD). He also drew on his own experience and education to create a template for a disaster preparedness, recovery and continuity plan that could be easily adapted to any small business.

Branson then began visiting with businesses, business organizations, chambers of commerce, mayors and other officials from smaller communities and insurance agencies to get the word out about the disaster preparedness template and his availability to work one-on-one with businesses. So far, he's worked directly with 40 small businesses to help them create their own disaster preparedness booklet from his original template.

Branson emphasizes that his preparedness plan involves everything from thinking about where business operations could be moved to continue operations during a disaster, how long a business could function in a different location, and how to

contact employees, to the more detailed items, such as keeping tubs full of disaster supplies, including flashlights and necessary medications for specific employees.

Teresa Irlbeck, administrative assistant and on the corporate compliance committee at Home Care Medical Equipment in Carroll, called Branson when her company was putting together an emergency preparedness plan for the patients to whom they supply oxygen.

"We needed to have things in place not only for our patients, but our three locations. We operate out of Carroll, Greene and Crawford counties," she said. "We contacted him after we came up with an initial plan. He met with our accreditation team, and we had him review our plan. He gave us pointers and the booklet which helped out quite a bit."

The plan came in handy for the company when an ice storm caused major power outages in Carroll and surrounding counties this winter, Irlbeck said.

In addition to handing out the disaster preparedness template to various businesses and organizations, Branson continues to share his booklet with his counterparts at other Council of Governments.

"Everyone thinks that a disaster is not going to happen to them," Branson said. "But if a business is prepared, then at least employees will be ready when it occurs."

Clip & Save...

Federal Agencies

General FEMA Information	800.621.FEMA (3362)
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.462.7585
FEMA Fraud Detection	800.323.8603
National Flood Insurance Program	800.427.4661
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.427.5593
Social Security Administration	800.772.1213
U.S. Small Business Administration	800.659.2955
Internal Revenue Service	800.829.1040
TTY for hearing/speech impaired	800.829.4059
Tax-Related Disaster Relief	866.562.5227
Housing & Urban Development Hotline	800.669.9777
Department of Veterans Affairs	800.827.0648

Iowa Contacts

For up-to-date disaster and recovery information visit the Rebuild Iowa Office Web site at www.rio.iowa.gov.

If you have questions about consumer fraud, contact Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division
888.777.4590 or 515.281.5926

To volunteer or make donations, contact:
Iowa Concern Hotline 800.447.1985

Disaster Unemployment Information 800.JOB.IOWA

Iowa Mortgage Help 877.622.4866 or
www.IowaMortgageHelp.com

Ticket to Hope crisis counseling
(call the Iowa Concern Hotline) 800.447.1985

Iowa Other Needs Assistance 800.659.2955

Other Needs Assistance 866.434.4692